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patient perseverance, strong faith and determination to do the *truth*, and be true at any and every sacrifice, conscious that all opposition must cease when faced by fact, and as time

goes on, and civilization advances, the men who would live *must* be with us, and those who will not sail in our boat, must sink to rise no more.

OUR "ARTICLES" EXAMINED.

An Essay Read before the Association, at the Regular Meeting, Tuesday, March 17th, 1863.

BY RUSSELL STURGIS, JR.

Concluded.

This peculiar Art of the Greeks remained the governing Art of the European world for centuries after the time of its highest glory. The era of Rome's ascendancy presents this phenomenon, that the conquering nation was without art, and with no religion nor literature self-asserting enough to be independent of the conquered. Rome was as great a lawmaker as a war maker, and organized into an homogeneous strength the multifarious nations she subdued, nations having nothing in common but their forced obedience to the great central brain power of the Latin aristocracy. But Egyptian Art was left to run its course, so that people forget, as they see Egypt preserved in the dreary London Gallery, that those statues of this or that god, which are so alike to the casual observer, and of the same block, seemingly, of speckled granite, are older and younger by three thousand years. And Greek Art was called on to expand itself to meet the new requirements, to beautify the colossal palaces of popular or imperial luxury, and to wed itself to systems of building never dreamed of by the easily-satisfied and uninventive Greeks. The attempt hopelessly failed. For a while the Greek sculptors worked for their imperial patrons as they had worked for the even more absolute Demus, and, amid a host of inferior statues and groups, a few remain to us of unapproachable greatness, produced during the reigns of the earlier Emperors. But nothing more was achieved, the Art could not or would not decorate the round-arched and vaulted Roman work, had no rules for making *architecture* out of this new sort of *building*, finally left it to itself, to go on to such triumphs of constructive excellence

and of naked ugliness as it might choose.

Remember what was said above of the limited range resulting from the Greek demand for perfected human sculpture, and see, now, how helpless this Greek Art is when it is called on to solve these new and mighty problems, propounded to it by Roman wealth and grandeur. What Phidias would have done if called on to build a Colosseum we do not know; genius has an answer of its own to all sorts of questions, and sure to be an answer that you and I would *not* think of, but what his disciples would say to it is evident enough.

Not that the Romans were very pressing in their demands. It was rather the fashion to have a statue by some great Greek master, probably a portrait of some famous ancestor, possibly a Venus, or a bas-relief of mythological legend. Moreover their lamps and lamp-stands, tripods and vases of bronze, were carefully enough designed by Greek artists who made it their business, or copied after what were to them antiques. The great public baths, moreover, and the palace halls of the gorgeous Emperors, were receptacles for great groups; Laocoons, and Belvedere Apollos, and what not. And the Triumphal arches, and trophies like Trajan's column, were encrusted with commemorative bas-relief; telling its story plainly enough, though hopelessly devoid of artistic merit. And these lordly Romans were the first to bethink them that a hero looked more heroic on his horse's back, and so set up equestrian statues. Still, I repeat, they were not pressing in their demands. Because, when the sculptors did all this, and declined to do more, the indifferent Romans went

on and built amphitheatres and temples with only such conventional carving as the Rules of architecture, then first heard of, ordered and provided for; Corinthian capitals namely, and Ionic spirals, and festoons with bulls' skulls to hang them to, and the entire stock in trade which has since been found so handy by modern classicists.

In short, the Romans, as *builders*, began modern times, all architecture since having sprung from their systems of building; but as artists they were simply without importance. Their influence on Art has been directly nothing, except where moderns have believed them to be great, and have imitated them accordingly.

Mr. President, I know all this is more or less dry. For I cannot go into detail, and it is detail that is interesting, not rapid sketching of general truths. I hope the Association will realize that I am but paving the way, and pointing out where we can all explore, with more entertaining results.

The huge mass of the Roman Empire vanished from the earth; not heroically, amid resistance to overwhelming power, not blown into fragments and scattered, but *devoured*, that is assimilated with, and affording sustenance to the forces that worked its destruction. It is like Baron Munchausen's adventure with the wolf; the wolf you know, devouring the Baron's horse, ate himself into the traces, and made, I believe, a good draught animal. So the barbarous tribes as they settled in the fair provinces of the Empire, called themselves Romans, filled up the Roman legions, and tried hard to speak the language and conform to the customs of those they were dispossessing. Out of these efforts of barbarians to talk Latin, came the languages we call French and Spanish, and Italian and Portuguese, and Wallach and Provençal; together with half our own. Out of their efforts to build as the Romans had done, came first the early Christian Basilicas, very like, in arrangement and construction to the Roman courts of Justice, from which they took their fashion and their name, but showing the new race in the abundant and various ornament and in the unskillful

work; second, the cognate, and nearly cotemporaneous styles called Byzantine, Pisan Romanesque, Round arched German, French *Romane*, and English and Sicilian Norman; third, what we call Gothic. The Roman race had passed away, and all its subject races with it; the great national fabrics of modern Europe founding themselves on the mingling of northern vigor and savagery, with southern effeminate refinement. The Roman indifference to beauty, and contempt of sentiment were gone, in their place were imagination, enthusiasm, love of the beautiful, and still more of the mysterious, the heroic, and the inspiring, and an overmastering religious sentiment. The Art of the middle ages was built of these materials.

The tenth century saw a perfectly organized style of work prevailing in every nation of Western Europe, but a general slackness of building, to be attributed, perhaps, to the belief, then very prevalent, that the world was to end with the year 1000. But the millennial year went by without any such overturn of existing arrangements, the world drew a long breath, and, in a few years, was building with wonderful energy and devotion. The eleventh century saw a cathedral built in almost every considerable town, every monastery rebuilt and re-embellished, every baron luxuriating in new halls and raising new fortifications, and every little burgh indulging in a triumphant bell-tower. Then a short season of less earnest work, and then the great thirteenth century begins, and Europe is once again rebuilt. It is wonderful to see. How it was possible to do so much in a century, with the sparse population, the divided energies, the irregular government and frequent wars of this period, is to us a mystery. How it was possible to set enough men to these works without starving the continent, we cannot understand. Take any county of England, any Province of France, take Lombardy or the Marches; go to Venice or Florence or Rouen; go even, to little third-rate towns, like Tournai—Bamberg, Cremona, as you will; see what still exists, ask the records what once existed, and feel your wonder grow day by day as you discover more and more of the truth. The more you compare this with the

work of modern times, the more surprising does it seem, for the nineteenth century has now and then tried to finish a cathedral, as at Milan, and at Cologne, and found it a herculean task enough. Somebody might amuse himself by ascertaining all the facts about the attempted completion of Cologne, how many years of collecting subscriptions, how many royal donations, how much commotion and stirring up of all Germany, have gone to the work already done. It is little enough, in proportion to the whole task. What then shall we think of the times and the nation in which were begun and successfully and rapidly carried on a score of such churches all at once? It is not our business now to inquire into the spirit and the systems that produced such works; when it is, we shall find ourselves in communion with a splendid era of enthusiasm and power.

Now, let us see of what nature was all this work of theirs. For if they were only *builders*, we shall think Christianity in Europe much less aspiring and purposeful than heathenism in Egypt. Let us take the earliest type of Christian Architecture, one of those Basilicas which the early Church built for its own worship, but which were modeled after the civic buildings which had constantly been appropriated to religious services.

There is a great central nave, the entrance at one end, and a semicircular apse at the other; and on each side is an aisle, separated from the nave by a row of columns, which supports what is called the clerestory wall, which wall rises above the roof of the aisle, and has windows in it which light the central nave. At first the clerestory walls rest on lintels, long stones spanning the space from column to column, but soon round arches are used to bridge these intervals. (The type has been preserved in all subsequent periods. Trinity church has a nave and two aisles, the clerestory walls resting on pointed arches, which spring from clustered piers.)

The design, you see, is simple enough. The windows are small and not elaborately molded. The roof is not high, and is simply framed of wood with a tie-beam and king post, there are no marvels of construction, But, if I could photograph on that

wall, in its colors as Dante saw it, Samminiato al Monte which looks over Florence; or the desolate church that lies moldering at Torcello among the Venetian Islands, you would realize that this nineteenth century does not so much as understand what these early builders meant by a church.

Recall the most elaborate mosaic tiled floor you have ever seen. Make it ten times more elaborate, substituting for its regular octagons, triangles and squares, every geometrical figure, in every sort of combinations; then, instead of uniformly colored bits of earthenware, use pieces of every precious marble, get your purple with porphyry, your green with serpentine, your blue with lapis lazuli, your colors generally with costly stones of which we hardly know the names, Onion stone, and Antique Black, and Peach Blossom Marble, (as Robert Browning translates the Italian names) then floor a church as large as Trinity, from end to end, with such mosaic as this. That is a weak and partial description of the floor of Torcello, built in 1005, and of like nature is that of St. Mark's at Venice, built 50 years later, with others now gone, and some still remaining.

Or, see what the Florentines did, not having the quarries of Greece and the East to draw from. Get Digby Wyatt's book, or Waring and McQuoid's, and see what was meant by a floor, for it is quite indescribable, this pavement of the Baptistry, or that of Samminiato, traceries of flowers and grotesques of animals, inlaid in black and white marble, infinitely varied in design, exhaustless, apparently, in fancy, delicate and careful in execution.

Let us go back to Venice a moment. Do you know what the walls of St. Mark's are like, within and without? They are sheathed with slabs of alabaster, lustrous, richly veined, semi-transparent, assuming with age always richer tints of golden brown, faint but warm. The great columns of the nave, fourteen in number, are, if I recollect aright, two feet in diameter and fifteen feet high, the shafts alone—and each shaft is a single piece of alabaster. Do you know what such a piece is worth, in the market? No, you do not, nor does any one, for such pieces have not been seen in Europe

since we have any record; there are none such above ground. And outside, the columns rank around the church, at first porphyry and serpentine alternately, then variously veined and clouded Greek marbles; there are five hundred of them, and all have white marble capitals, all of different designs. Going inside again, we find the ceiling vaulted and domed, and sheathed in gold; mosaics on a gold ground, of sacred subjects, the enduringness of the colors quite sufficiently assured by their material, for they are composed of little cubes of glass, showing gold or bright color on one face.

I do not mean to describe St. Mark's, for it has been thoroughly done already, and it would take too long. I wish only to call your attention to a building, the richness and variety of which the mind accepts as it does the infinite beauty of a mountain landscape, content to be overwhelmed.

Observe, that all this splendor was not different in *kind*, but only in *degree* from the daily surroundings of all the multitude of Venice, as they threaded her dark alleys, floated in carved and gilded gondolas along her canals, (they were not *black* boats until Venice herself began to lose her rainbow hues,) or entered her silent and incense-filled churches. St. Mark's was beautiful, but not strange to them. The canals reflected everywhere the colors of rich marbles and more brilliant mosaic. The houses of the city were rich with decoration, and blossomed into delicate carving of the plants and animals of the Lombard plains and the shores of the Adriatic.

The infancy of Venice was so gorgeous; her maturity graver and more restrained, but splendid and perfect beyond our power to imagine. Florence was stern and solemn in her youth, being vexed with constant broil and battle, but arrayed herself in beauty as she grew into strength and quietness. Verona, at war or at peace, was always adorning herself, and with the most faultless taste and inexhaustible imagination; and so stands the record with Mantua, and Bergamo, and Ferrara, and Parma, and every town in Italy.

They were all independent republics, and needed council houses, municipal palaces, or what not. They required

bell-towers, also, and the nobles built for themselves palaces around the market-place. Moreover, every principal city was a Cathedral town, and was crowded with smaller churches as well. In fact, they had nearly the same needs that we have; and their buildings were not larger, except a few churches, than many of ours; but they were, in many respects, more noble, the mere building itself, I mean; it is quite easy to see why. In the first place, the prevalent style gave, of necessity, more beautiful lines; through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the pointed arch was universal; the windows were gathered into groups of two, or three, or four, divided by shafts of polished marble; the system of cusping commonly employed, made every window-head beautiful in form, a suggestion of the triple leaves that nature seems to delight in. Tracery being sometimes necessary, fell naturally into pleasant forms of opening, and called the attention of the most casual observer to its lovely contrast of purple shadow with sunlit marble. It was advisable to fortify cities and castles, and battlements were set along the walls, and battlements were not of necessity square, but fell easily into graceful ways, and were forked and swallow-tailed. The picturesque effect of the walls of Verona is quite indescribable. I think the loveliest bridge I have ever seen is the Ponte Vecchio, of that glorious city, and all because of its rather startling group of three unequal arches, and its fringe of forked battlements on either side.

I could spend the evening multiplying examples of the beauty which seems inseparable from all this work; as the Egyptians had all that could make mere building grand, so these mediævalists had all that could make it lovely. But all the achievements possible, in building, were unsatisfying to the one as to the other race of builders. They made the frame beautiful when they could, but it didn't annoy them much to have things go a little unevenly with it, it was only a frame, beautiful as it might be.

Of what they put into the frame I propose to speak at length at other times, with such illustrations as I can have prepared on a large scale, that we may all see them at once. It is

almost useless to hold up or to pass around these photographs. Barnum and some Brooklyn Barnum, are exhibiting splendid effects of stereoscopic art, I understand, by illuminating glass views, magic-lantern-wise, and throwing the image in large on a screen. When our photographers find it profitable to take pictures of details as well as of distant groups, of sculpture in its place, as well as of sculpture out of place, because *having* no place in this world, we shall begin to understand what the word "architecture" really means.

For forty years or thereabouts, there has been going on, throughout Europe a certain revival of natural and Christian architecture, which has taken form and consistence, during the past fifteen years, and become a power and a success. The practical effects of this have been the reproduction of mediæval forms, and, as resulting from it a certain amount of design in the mediæval spirit, but perfectly consistent with modern requirements, original and true, moreover the restoration and repair of monuments of the middle ages, which had, before, been sadly neglected or abused. This process of restoration, though badly enough managed sometimes, and frequently destroying what it was meant to help, has brought to light many things which would not else have been known to us. Lumber being removed, there have appeared carved capitals and archivolts, whitewash being carefully removed; wall paintings

come to light, and carving that was hardly known to exist, appears in sharp perfection.

We find the architecture of the middle ages the richest in adornment, and the most universally adorned of all. Like the Egyptians, they possessed a system of building well calculated to engross the thoughts and satisfy the ambition of the builders; and, like them, they made it the servant to their abundant, varied, and significant decoration. All material became ornamental in their hands, marble and limestone they carved into studies from nature, plants, and birds and beasts, men and their deeds, and called *this* their ornaments; brick they molded, and made it as rich as the carved stone; iron they hammered into climbing vines and tracery of foliage; wood they shaped and colored into beauty and meaning. Within doors they painted what most interested them, the Bible History, legends and miracles of saints, martyrdoms, and visions of heaven; the whole record of the church; and with such deeds of their own or of their admired ancestors as the engrossing subject of religion could allow room for.

An abrupt ending is as good as any. I have tried to illustrate certain clauses of our article of belief; when we discuss other clauses there will be a demand for close analysis and accurate description in the discussion of mediæval ornament. The inspiration we most need is to be found therein.

GOOD WORK IN THE ACADEMY EXHIBITION.

408. SPRING LEAVES,

BY ARTHUR PARTON.

This is the second time that the work of this young man has appeared before the N. Y. public. He has been working in Philadelphia, and shows positive evidence of the influence of W. T. Richards. He seems to be very sincere in his work, and evidently *believes* in nature; there is a great deal of growth and grace and good drawing in the large weed in the centre of this little study; the other weeds are not so carefully painted and are made dark, I suppose with the unfortunate

purpose of giving prominence to the large one, and the work is marred by the careless way in which some little tree stems, and a little pool at the top of the canvass, are painted. Then the color, except perhaps in the centre of the picture, is not natural, it is a very dark, dead green in place of the Creator's gorgeous, glowing green and gold. Do not let us be afraid of Nature's brilliant color, it is one of the noblest things she does for us.

It gives me real pain to see a young man whose intentions seem to be so right, painting the centre of his picture so faithfully and then deliberately falsify-